

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IT

SUBJECT: STATUS OF USINT DAMASCUS

REF: ROME 468

BEIRUT PASS DAMASCUS

1. FOLLOWING ARE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY AMBAS-
SADOR BUCCI:

A. USG AND SARG SIMPLY AGREED TO SEND THEIR OWN
REPRESENTATIVES TO STAFF INTEREST SECTIONS IN RESPECTIVE
CAPITALS IN ORDER TO OPEN DIRECT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICA-
TION BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS. ONLY ELABORATION ON THIS
TOOK PLACE IN MEETING DECEMBER 18 BETWEEN AMB. BUFFUM,
KORN AND DEPUTY FM ISMAIL WHEN IT WAS AGREED THAT U.S.
COULD HAVE TWO DIPLOMATIC OFFICERS AND THREE STAFF PERSON-
NEL (SUBSEQUENTLY AMENDED PER AGREEMENT BETWEEN SCOTES AND
ISMAIL TO THREE DIPLOMATIC OFFICERS AND TWO STAFF) AND THAT

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INDEPENDENT AND DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES WOULD BE
REQUIRED. EMBASSY SHOULD INFORM FOREIGN MINISTRY FOR ITS

OWN AND BUCCI'S INFORMATION ONLY THAT THERE IS NO WRITTEN OR OTHER DETAILED AGREEMENT BETWEEN USG AND SARG ON INTERESTS SECTIONS.

B. PROTOCOL SIGNED JUNE 10, 1967 SHOULD BE REVISED AND PROPERTY REFERRED TO THEREIN SHOULD BE RECONSIDERED TO

U.S. CUSTODY. AS SOON AS NECESSARY PERMISSION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM SARG FOR IMPORT PRIVILEGES ETC.; USINT WILL HANDLE ITS OWN ADMINISTRATION. LOCAL EMPLOYEES ENGAGED IN U.S. INTERESTS ACTIVITIES NOW BEING PAYROLLED BY ITALIAN EMBASSY WILL BE REHIRED BY USINT. SCOTES HAS INSTRUCTIONS ON ALL OF THIS.

C. USG EXPECTS SCOTES GENERALLY TO TAKE OVER ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES CONNECTED WITH REPRESENTATION OF AMERICAN INTERESTS IN SYRIA.

2. EMBASSY SHOULD SAY WE RECOGNIZE THIS ARRANGEMENT MAY LEAVE SOME QUESTIONS UNANSWERED BUT BELIEVE THAT WITH TIME AND IN TRADITIONAL SPIRIT OF U.S.-ITALIAN COOPERATION IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO RESOLVE ANY PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE. WE ENVISAGE OUR OPERATION IN DAMASCUS AS BEING IN MOST RESPECTS LIKE THAT WE HAD UNDER ITALIAN PROTECTION IN YEMEN FROM TIME OF ASSIGNMENT OF U.S. DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL IN APRIL 1970 UNTIL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WERE RESUMED IN JULY 1972. INTERESTS SECTION WILL HAVE INDEPENDENT FACILITIES AND DIRECT ACCESS TO HOST GOVERNMENT, BUT INTSEC CHIEF WILL OF COURSE KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ITALIAN AMBASSADOR. WE ARE, OF COURSE, AWARE THERE IS POTENTIAL POSSIBILITY FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN SITUATION IN WHICH USG HAS OFFICE IN DAMASCUS OPERATING LARGELY INDEPENDENTLY BUT UNDER ITALIAN FLAG, BUT THIS TYPE OF ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN PRACTICED IN SEVERAL ARAB CAPITALS UNDER A NUMBER OF FOREIGN FLAGS SINCE 1967 WAR WITH QUITE SATISFACTORY RESULTS. EMBASSY SHOULD ASSURE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT WE WILL BE ALERT TO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT HAVE UNTOWARD IMPACT ON ITALIAN INTERESTS IN SYRIA AND WILL COORDINATE FULLY WITH ITALIANS ON SUCH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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MATTERS.

3. SUGGEST SCOTES FIND OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ALONG ABOVE LINES TO AMB. BUCCI. RUSH

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